GIRISH KARNAD AS A CHRONICLER: EXPLORING THE HISTORY, CULTURE AND POLITICS OF INDIA IN HIS SELECTED PLAYS

A

Synopsis

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DECLARTION

I hereby declare that the task which is being presented in the synopsis, entitled "**Girish Karnad as a Chronicler: Exploring the History, Culture and Politics of India in His Selected Plays",** submitted to Desh Bhagat University, Mandi Gobindgarh, Punjab is an original piece of work completed under the guidance of **Dr. Manjinder Kaur Wratch, Assistant Professor, Desh Bhagat University, Mandi Gobindgarh, Punjab**.

The matter embodied in this synopsis has not been submitted by me for the award of any other degree of any other institute or university.

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Introduction

Apart from all other literary forms ‘drama’ is a unique, authoritative and realistic representation of human life. In his ever famous work *Poetics* written in 335 B.C, the Greek philosopher, Aristotle apprises us in its third chapter that the word ‘drama’ is derived from a Dorian root ‘dran’ which means “to act” (Hossain 18). Thus, drama, as a form of literature, signifies “a composition in which people are displayed as doing something” (Srivastava 1). Like other genres of literature it imitates life and as a form its composition is primarily designed for theatrical performances. It is the embodiment of the creative world of a man that manifests the innermost feelings, attainments, thoughts and dilemmas to provide novelty, elegance and innovativeness to day to day life. It mirrors cultures, traditions, customs, manners and activities of the people living in a particular society. As a matter of fact, literature behaves like an animate object that grows and shrinks and hence all forms of literature have experienced substantial changes. Drama as a form is not strange to this which is well comprehended in the definition of John Dryden who conceives that it should be, “A just and lively image of human nature representing its passions and humours and the changes of fortune to which it is subject for the delight and instruction of mankind” (q. in Sen 38).

Greek Dramatists

Drama can be categorized into two kinds- Tragedy and Comedy. Their origin could be traced in Greek period.

Aeschylus (c.525-c.456): He is considered as the earliest creator of Greek tragedy. He was famous for producing suspense on the stage. His notable plays are *The Suppliants*, *The Persians*, *Seven Against Thebes* and *Prometheus Bound*. In ancient Greece, dancing and singing on the occasion of rituals were necessary segments of daily life and culture. So took their artistic representation in drama. He in his artistic belief allowed a chorus and single actor in tragic drama due to which the tradition of true stage dialogue was introduced in the framework of tragedy. However, he also laid emphasis on imposing costumes and high soled shoes called tragic ‘buskins’ for the actors and elaborated machinery for the stage.

Sophocles (c.496-406 BC): He is ranked as second Greek dramatist ever born at Colonus- a part of Athens, always famous for his work *Antigone*. He is believed to have created 123 plays and more. Among various works *Ajax* is considered as an early Greek tragedy by him seising upon a historical event during the sway of *Trojen war*. *Oedipus Tyrannus* is a play written on the myths of Theban legend 'Oedipus'. *Antigone, Oedipus at Colonus* and *Oedipus Tyrannus* together are famous as Sophocles' Theban trilogy.

Euripides (c.484-c.406 BC): He is not an exception in Greek dramatic eminence. He was a priest of a temple at Phlya and it is said that most of his life was spend in loneliness. He is said to have written 120 plays among which 90 are extant completed. *Alcestis, Medea, Women of Trachis, Hippolytes* and *Hereclues* are most significant dramas by him. He is said to have employed a technique called 'dues ex machina' which in English is translated as supernatural machinery. It is because of Euripides' Greek tragedy emerged more tragic than ever before. His familiarity lies in the invention of plots for his own plays his predecessors could not do.

Like tragedy, the records of Greek comedy can be discovered to the 5th century prior to Christian era. It is marked by two periods that is 'Old Comedy' and 'New Comedy'. The former is delineated by Cratinus and Aristophanes while the chief advocate of the latter is Menander. It is noteworthy to mention here that Aristophanes was the only prominent figure in 'Old Comedy' period. His preserved plays are *The Acharnians, The Knights, The Wasps, Lysistrata, The Clouds, Women at the Thesmophoria, The Frogs* and *Wealth*, etc. He mocked the gods, immoral individuals and Athenian institutions in his plays. Aristophanes represented the ironic situations, ordinary characters, false identities and humour in his plays. *Lysistrata* blatantly opposes the social codes of Athens which averted women from participation in government. The play shows the political criticism leveled at the governors of Athens. His play *The Frogs* appears to be a lampoon in opposition to the glorious tragedians like Euripides and Aeschylus. This play is the articulation of his wrath and disagreement with the delinquent government of his country, convoyed by false leaders like Cleophon and Cleon.

Greek dramatist Menander was a well-known representative of 'New Comedy'. His famous plays are *The Shield, The Curmudgeon, The Arbitration, The Man she Hated, Shorn, The Girl from Samos* and *The Sicyonian*. He composed 108 comedies and received the prize at the ancient

Greek annual festival ‘Lenaia’ 8 times. The Menandrian comedy contains pivotal plots depicting love, discovery and betrayal. It is Menander who produced love for the first time as a principal element in drama. The characters in his plays show the duplicity and ignorance of his times and the truth is known to the audience by his art of characterisation. He renders his slave characters as independent individuals whose acts are based on their own ideologies and goals. His comedy *The Curmudgeon* written as *Dyskolos* in Greek is the examination of class struggle of the time and unfolds the multiple perspectives of human life.

European Drama

The Roman theatre got under the direct control of Roman Catholic Church in the middle ages. In churches and monasteries, the priests and church members used to perform liturgical dramas in the then theatre. Drama was classified into three types; The Mystery or Cycle plays, Miracle plays and Morality plays. So far as the mystery plays are concerned, they were allowed by church but their production was done by the craftsmen of the time. These plays were aimed to show the mysteries of God, the entire history of the universe from the creation of the heavens and the blue planet to the judgment day. The stories in them were taken from The Holy Bible. The most famous mystery plays are *The Creation* and *Fall of Man, Cain and Abel*, *Noah and Flood*, etc. In miracle plays, the lives, miracles and the martyrdom of saints were the main themes. Along with the above two, the most dominant and famous were the morality plays that developed from the 14th century and exhorted people of the age through allegorical representations in them. These plays delineated the human vices and virtues, abstract traits and subjective struggle between good and evil. The plots were based on religious themes, involving the actual judgment in the world hereafter. Under this category some notable plays are *Everyman*, *The Second Shepherd’s Play, Mankind, The Castle of Perseverance*, etc.

The Golden age of English drama is often marked between 1576 and 1642 as this period witnessed some tumultuous changes. The writers of the period wrestled with the overflow of new ideas and technologies. They were relatively free to touch social issues of the age although the content of the plays was disallowed to be based on the religious and political subjects. Shakespeare’s dramatic epoch acts as an agent of how writing style changed. He jotted down

some historical plays on English subjects such as Richard II and Henry IV prior to 16th century. Along with these, he wrote on Roman subjects like Julius Ceaser. He is popular for both his comedies as well as tragedies. In his romantic comedies, he is commemorated for *A Mid Summer Night's Dream* and *As You Like It*. Shakespeare revolutionized the theatre by his everlasting tragedies- *Hamlet, Othello, King Lear and Macbeth*. The primary focus of his comedies was on moral and social problems. These plays deal with the themes of forgiveness and hope. On the other hand, his tragedies depict death, revenge, power, love, greed and loyalty.

Shakespeare's contemporary and the Renaissance man of his times, Christopher Marlowe portrays the dog-self of a man which is clearly seen in his *Doctor Faustus.* It is a morality play where Marlowe scans the divided self of a man and represents the greatest tragedies of the Elizabethan period. He was one of the university wits and became the stepping-stone of Shakespeare's tragedies. Besides Shakespeare and Marlowe, it is Ben Johnson who varies his methodology of writing comedy in comparison to the 'Bard of Avon' (William Shakespeare). In his exemplary play *Every Man in His Humor* (1598) Johnson claimed in its prologue that he chose realistic approach for writing his comedies which was completely different from Shakespeare's romantic perspective in his comedies. His other praiseworthy plays are *Volpone* (1606) and *The Alchemist* (1610). His comedies are satirical in nature and lay emphasis upon the accommodation of comedy to the rectification of manners. Technically there is a reflection of classical writers in his works. In hindmost advancements in comedy, the literary world confronts one of the world's grand comic masters.

Moliere (1622-1673): He in his unforgettable plays like *Tartuffe* (1664), *Misanthrope* (1660), *The Affected Ladies* (1659) and *The Bourgeois Gentleman* (1670) uncovered the hypocrisy, lust and demoralisation in French society. In 1660, Charles II ascended the throne of England and theaters got reopened after eight years and the period came to be known as Restoration period. In this period 'comedy of manners' took its name and fame. Restoration comedy scrutinized society and is viewed by realism, social examination and satire.

William Congreve (1670- 1729): He however with his *Love for Love* (1695) and *The way of the world* (1700) shifted the style of representation of manners to the trend of sentimentalism that

marked its domination in 18th century. It was Oliver Goldsmith (1728-1774) who skillfully attempted to write a sentimental comedy and got back to the shrewd and foolish clowns of William Shakespeare to bring tears and laughter for the then audience. Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773) and R.B. Sheridan's (1751-1816) *The Rivals* (1775) are the best examples to grasp and apprehend the crux of sentimental comedies. Apart from all these iconic dramatists, the exceptionality and brilliance of Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) could not be forsaken for his masterpiece *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895) as the title of this play drives our inner significantly towards earnestness a quality of being sincere, honest, serious and thoughtful in life within the multidimensional challenges of modernity.

Before discussing Modern Drama it is necessary to mention Melodrama and Well-Made play. The most admired form of drama in 19th century was Melodrama. It developed urban audience and observed moral justice strictly. Following its reputation a new form—Well-Made play—existed in France. Its approbation can be accredited to Augustan Eugene Scribe (1791-1861). He showed growing suspense and logical aspirations in his plays. Originally the term Well-Made play was given as an honour to depict the solidly knit plots for which Scribe became prominent.

Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906): He is usually considered as the father of Modern drama. He is noticed as social realist and a commentator of social issues of his age. His notable plays are *The Pillars of the Society* (1877), *A Doll's House* (1879) and *Ghosts* (1881) concerning with women's rights, sexually transmitted disease and corruption brought new whims of reality on the European stage.

George Bernard Shah (1856-1950): He was a socialist whereas **Betolt Brecht (1898-1956)** on the other hand was Marxist. So they differ in spirit and quality in their plays. In *Arms and The Man* (1894), *Man and Superman* (1903) and *Major Barbara* (1905) Shaw satirises the romantic love, blind traditional beliefs of military eminence and demoralisation of poverty. Bretcht's plays like *Mother courage and Her children* (1941), *The Good Women of Szechwan* (1943) and *The Caucasian Chalk circle* (1948) show his theoretical optimism rather facile one and rejected Aristotelian drama after creating his own 'Epic Theatre.' He firmly conveyed that drama must not create an illusion of reality and persuaded the audience to be rational rather emotional while

watching the play and gave the concept of 'de-familiarization' that in German words could be termed as 'Verfremdungskefft effect' which implies distancing or making strange. Modern drama cannot be well understood without adducing Samuel Beckett.

Samuel Beckett (1906-1989): Beckett's plays created an existential feeling on the stage before audience and he was considered one of the key dramatists related to Martin Esslin's "The Theatre of the Absurd". Beckett will be remembered endlessly for his Magnum opus play *Waiting for Godot* that was originally published in (2005). The play is triggered to represent modern man's living in absurdity. It is obsessed with the feelings of chaos, despair and meaninglessness in mortal life.

He believes in mind and his writings are purely reason oriented. His other notable works are *Murphy* (1938), *Molly* (1951), *The Unnamable* (1953), *Endgame* (1957) *Happy Days* (1961), etc. His characters remain failed to search the truth and escape from worldly pursuits and sufferings. The play *Waiting for Godot* (2005) is a tragic comedy, portrays Vladimir and Estragon as a mirror of the modern society and its entanglement in delusion.

In 20th century **Harold Pinter** (1930-2008) becomes visible as one the most talented dramatists in Britain. His prestigious plays involve *The Birthday Party* (1957), *The Homecoming* (1964) *and Betrayal* (1978). In his play *The Birthday Party*, Pinter draws a horrible sketch of man, goaded by social restraints the principal cause of his loss of individuality. Harold Pinter like his erstwhile playwrights connected to the Theatre of the Absurd, emphasizes rationality with well reasoned dialogues by characters in his plays. Other than Beckett, Pinter and Eugene Ionesco—Tom Stoppard and Howard Barker stimulated European drama to a very large extent.

Drama existed as a little amusement, went through numerous leaps and bounds and impressed different dramatists from varied corners of the universe. From Greek to England it made its journey with manifold fluctuations and encountered playwrights like Marlowe, Shakespeare and Ben Johnson and also outstretched the regions of Rome and France. Methodologically, it met different concerns and accessed to number of countries like Africa, Ireland, America and India along with its advancement as acclaimed genre at the global level with multifaceted approaches.

The extension of drama is noteworthy to be discussed in India and will be aired in detail in next part ahead.

Indian English Drama

Indian theatre can be predominantly categorized into three phases. The initial one is ranked by the supreme quality of dramatic literature in Sanskrit having resourceful presenting styles as well as a profound theatrical reflection as in *Natyashastra* the 5th Veda in its status by the mythic Brahman Sage **Bharata** (1st century BCE to 3rd century CE). The second phase is marked after the downturn of the classical Sanskrit theatre and the arrival of regional languages in India with well versed theatre including the variation in socio-political conditions. During the 19th century, the experience of India with the West had deep political, economic, social and cultural effects in theatrical field. This period is represented as the third phase of Indian theatre. Some famous Sanskrit dramatists like *Bhasa, Kalidasa, Shudraka, Vishakhadatta and Bhavabooti* gave tongue to human emotions and exposed social life, political stratagems and individual morality of the times exclusively. The noted plays under classical Sanskrit literature are *Urubhanga* written in the 2nd or 3rd century CE, *Shakuntala* in 5th century, *Mudrarakshasa* in 6th century and *Uttararamacarita* in 8th century.

As far as the genesis of Indian English Drama is concerned, it shed its maiden glow with the play *The Persecuted* (1837) by Krishna Mohan Benerjee. The play shows the tricky nature of Brahmins and highlights the havoc in the minds of the subtle Bengali youth between the old and new ideas deeply enrooted by the western education. This play was not the sole attempt in Bengali but all over India for a long span of time. Although, Indian English Drama started its journey with Michel Madhusudhan Dutt's *Is this called civilization* (1871), *Ratnawali* (1858), *Sermista* (1859) *and Nation Builders* (1922) but these plays remained less impressive for many years. After lengthy break, Indian English Drama in 20th century got impulse under the influence of British Drama. Before freedom we face some remarkable personalities like Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, Harindranath Chattopadhyaya, Lobo Prabhu and Bharati Sarabhai who came up with significant growth and development of IED.

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941): He was the most magnificent figure in modern Bengali literature, earned Noble Prize in 1913 for literature in Indian English Poetry. Indian spirit can be well recognized in his plays like *The Post Office* (1912), *Sacrifice* (1913), *Chitra* (1914) *and Mukhtadhara* (1922). His plays have been grouped into two kinds- Thesis plays and Psychological Plays. Thesis plays present social issues with realistic approach whereas in psychological plays, Tagore explores his characters' inner trauma and mechanism to render his way of thinking in a crystal clear manner. He contributed a lot to the allegorical significance of IED. He unified Indian and European traditions while creating his plays a mixture of Bengali folk drama and mystery plays written in medieval west.

Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950): He was a freedom fighter and as a dramatist, he contributed a plethora of literature in IED. The main feature of his plays is that they are concerned with varied cultures and nations in different ages. His *Persues the Deliverer* (1944) is rooted in the Greek myth of Persues; *Vasavadutta* (1987) in ancient Indian romantic stories, *Rodogune* (1959) is a romance of Syria and *Viziers of Bassora* (1959) takes us to Persia.

Harindranath Chattopadhyaya (1898-1990): He was known for his dexterity and rapid productivity in IED. His *Five Plays* (1937) is a collection of his socialist plays: *The Window, The Parrot, The Sentry's Lantern*, *The Coffin* and *The Evening Lamp* delivered realism for the first time to drama and spotlighted social consciousness in his era.

Bharati Sarabhai (1912- present): She is the first woman playwright during the imperial period. She gives Gandhian tinge to IED. Her plays *The Well of the people* (1943) and *Two Women* (1952) express a deep effect of Gandhian line of thinking with regard to their themes. She links Indian tradition with contemporary political, social and economic tumults.

Lobo Prabhu (1942- present): He is the latest figure in IED before Independence. Prior to 1947, he got only two plays published—*Mother of New India* (1944) and *Death Abdicates* (1945). Thematically *Mother of New India* deals with social reformation. He is proficient in writing dialogues and his characters don't take shape true to life and effective to the audience.

Asif Currimbhoy (1928- 1994): He was considered the most prominent Indian English dramatist of post-Independence era. He wrote over thirty plays within eighteen years. The subject matter of his plays is historical, political, economic, socio-religious, philosophy, art and East-West encounter. His outstanding plays include *The Captives* (1963), *Goa* (1964), *Inquilab* (1964) and *The Refugee* (1971) shed light on the socio-political and historical issues.

Nissim Ezekiel (1924- 2004): He was a fertile playwright who delivered a lot to this genre. However, he was far-famed as a poet to the literary field. His notable 'Three Plays'(1969) include *Nalini*, *Marriage Poem* and *The Sleepwalkers* share out the barrenness of urban middle class, worthlessness of social conventions and the practice of marriage.

So far as the modern IED is concerned, it is innovative in nature and ascribed the bedrock of a unique convention in the history of drama by representing history, religion, myth, legend and folklore so as to handle modern socio political affairs. Girish Karnad, Mohan Rakesh, Badal Sircar and Vijay Tendulkar inaugurated and developed the contemporary Indian English Theatre.

Girish Karnad (1938- 2019): One of the top-tier dramatists in India, Girish Karnad was born on 19 May 1938, in Matheran (Maharashtra). A versatile genius, Karnad has gained global applaud as a poet, playwright, critic, actor, director and translator. In 1958, he did his Bachelor of Arts Degree in Mathematics and Statistics at Oxford University. After Graduation, he studied Masters in Philosophy, Politics and Economics there. Karnad primarily wanted to be a poet, but fate turned him to be a distinguished dramatist. He went back to ancient English drama to manifest how history and myth can work as a strapping medium to amplify present-day situations. Being an actor, chronicler, witty playwright and canny director, Karnad got exposed to the literary field in 20th century when there was no appeal for general public in theatre. It was the time when there was a confrontation between two traditions—Western and Native. His plays like *Yayati* (1961), *Tughlaq* (1964) *Hayavadana* (1971), *Nagamandala* (1988), *Tale-Danda* (1990) have their roots in Indian history, mythology, culture, politics, legend and folk story. Structurally and metaphorically his dramas provide new essence to the past from the stance of present.

Karnad won the President's Gold Medal for his significant role in the film, *Samskara*, in 1970. He was the seventh Jnanpith Award winner in 1999 for his second ever historical play

Tughlaq (1964). As a contemporary playwright he used Indian history and mythology to shed light on modern issues diligently. In order to reach a substantial audience, he translated his plays into English and earned commendable reputation at an international level. In the collaboration of his contemporaries like Vijay Tendulkar and Rakesh Mohan, he tried to maintain his nation's cultural legacy and values. His deep insight into the human nature had made him an eminent playwright and actor. By employing historical, mythical and folk themes, he pervaded psychoanalysis of man in his plays and held mirror to visualize human follies, class conflicts, identity crisis, moral degradations and restlessness in the existing society.

Mahesh Dattani (1958- present): He is the utmost Indian English Dramatist who followed Karnad and was awarded by the Sahitya Akademi in 1998 for his book of plays *Final Solutions* and *Other Plays*. He is considered as a sterling voice whose plays are implanted in modern urban occurrence. Like Girish Karnad, he is a director, actor, playwright, producer and the founder of the 'Play Pen'—a theatre group aims for the promotion of plays written not only in English but also regional languages. His plays show contemporary Indian society in different respects.

Vijay Tendulkar (1928-2008): He was one more literary icon whose contribution cannot be denied. It is pertinent to mention him here for his literary profusion and unforgettable service. He gave importance to middle class people in his works. The plays: *Ghasiram Kotwall* (1972), *Silence! The Court is in Session* (1967) and *Sakharam Binder* (1972) unveil the repression of women and mock the certified middle class. He had altered the structure and semblance of Indian drama with his Marathi plays. He talked about the segregation of man and his clash with belligerent milieu. His plays were based on the theme of savagery and persecution.

Along with the above mentioned dramatists, we have other eye-catching playwrights who have contributed Indian English Drama to continue its soulful expedition. Worth mentioning among them are Badal Sircar (1925-2011), Mohan Rakesh (1925-1972), Gieve Patel (1938-present), Uma Parameswaran (1938- present) and Mangula Padmanabhan (1953- present). Badal Sircar is an esteemed figure in the ambit of contemporary theatre. *Evam Indrajit* (1962), *That Other History* (1964) and *There Is No End* (1971) are his famous plays based on socio-political, existential and psychological complications. Similarly Mohan Rakesh's impact on IED cannot be

disregarded. “As a dramatist, he had observed the problems like divided self, lasting threat to human relationships, ego conflicts, illusion and nothingness in his notable plays like *Asadh Ka Ek Din* (1958), *Lahron Ke Rajhans* (1963) and *Aadhe Adhure* (1969). The remark and critical heed should also be given to the playwrights like M.V Rama Sarma for his eleven plays in *Collected Plays* (1982), Rajindra Paul for *Ashes Above Fire* (1970), Derek Antao for *Give Us this day a black sheep* (1980) and Shashi Tharoor for *Twenty Two Months In The Life Of a Dog, The Five Dollar Smile* (1990) and R.Raja Roa’s *The Wisest Fool On Earth and other plays*” (Shah 56). It is apt to say that dramatists like Badal Sircar, Mohan Rakesh, Tendulkar, Mahesh Dattani and Girish Karnad have produced imaginative, inventive and quick-witted contributions for the enhancement of the Indian English Drama. Girish Karnad is supreme among them. He skillfully connected the Indian past with its present scenario and uncovered manifold subjects having eminent importance in the contemporary society.

Works

Yayati **(1961)**

This is Karnad’s first ever play that talks about Yayati’s curse given by his father-in-law Shukracharya who is infuriated by Yayati’s adultery. He is given curse of early old age and Yayati can retrieve his curse only if someone is ready to swap his youth with him. He tells everyone about his curse but nobody is willing to do this kind of exchange and then finally his son, Puru, offers his consent. The play was written and produced in Kannada and got an immediate success on the stage. It was an existential play on the theme of duty and responsibility. It impressed the critics and modern audience as it is the representation of contemporary issues with the help of the ancient myth.

Tughlaq **(1964)**

Tughlaq is a historical play written at Oxford. The play deals with the last five years of the turbulent reign of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq (1327- 32). In 1327, the action initiates in Delhi then moves to the road from Delhi to Daulatabad and finally ends at Daulatabad. The play

deals with the idealistic policies of Sultan Tughlaq and also talks about the unfulfilled dreams in the Nehruvian era.

***Hayavadana* (1971)**

The inspiration of the play is taken from a famous 11th century collection of Indian legends *Kathasaritasagara* the book by Somadeva and its adaptation is based on the *The Transposed Heads* (1941) by Thomas Mann.

The play deals with the story of two fast friends, Devadatta the learned man, and Kapila the man of strong body. They fall in love with same girl Padmini and that results in the brutal death of the trio at the end of the play. Karnad here highlights the issues of Identity crisis and incompleteness of human personality by employing all the symbols and conventions of folk theatre.

***Naga-Mandala* (1988)**

Karnad's this play intertwines the two folk tales of Kannada altogether. The chief one concentrating on the Snake's conversion into a man and last sexual commencement of the actress Rani with him while the frame story exposes the idea of tales having an existence unallied of their narrators. It is a feminist play and talks about woman's role in society. It also interprets the theme of split personality disorder in humans.

***Tale-Danda* (1990)**

In *Tale-Danda* (1990), Karnad tries to restructure the traditional values of socio-political systems regarding caste. The play highlights the 'Mandir' and the 'Mandal' movements in India and criticizes severely the contemporary religious fundamentalism and the brutality committed in the sacred name of religion.

***Agni Mattu Male (The Fire and the Rain*, 1995)**

This is yet another great play in which Girish's concerns are with the orthodox controversy between ritual and asceticism. It is a play within a play that draws our attention towards the

relationship between brothers and cousins. Karnad uses an incident from *Mahabharata* as his source to the greed for power and family betrayal in modern society.

***The Dreams of Tipu Sultan* (2004)**

The valiant Tipu has endured to subdue Indian and British ingenuity for over two centuries, as the ceaseless flow of scholarly tasks, plays, novels and ballads about his blustering life and tragic end witnesses. The play is the subjective analysis of the life of this brave warrior, political visionary and outstanding dreamer. Karnad moves from English to Kannada, conveying multilingual reality in India through this drama, a record of Tipu's dreams that he kept hidden from his nearest comrades. *The Dreams of Tipu Sultan* also depicts that how Tipu's book of dreams is an indication of his downfall in future.

***Odakalu Bimba (A Heap of Broken images,* 2005)**

The play is inspired by T.S. Eliot's poem, *The Waste Land* (1922). It is different from all other creations he created in his entire career. Instead of having plot based on mythology and history, it has a very contemporary theme and talks about a writer who is failed in her own language, but gains national and global victory when she shifts to writing in English. It focuses on the trials and adversities of being a writer in two languages and highlights the betrayal of a writer with his or her mother tongue.

Besides the above mentioned plays, Karnad had penned down some other notable plays like *Ma Nishada*, a radio play in 1964, *Anjumallige* (1977), *Hittna Hunja* (1980) and *Bali-The Sacrifice* (2002).

Review of Literature

Literature review is the backbone of research. Research task from diverse perspectives has been done in the light of different works. Some of them are discussed below:

***Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies* (1996)** is a book written by Stuart Hall, edited by David Morley and Kaun-Hsing Chen. This book provides a representative selection of Hall's enormously useful writings on cultural studies and its concerns.

***What is Cultural Studies? : A Reader* (1997)** is a book edited by John Storey. This book demonstrates the wide scope of cultural studies. It is an introduction to the said approach through a series of attempts to define it.

***History of European Drama and Theatre* (2002)** is a book written by Erika Fischer-Lichte and translated by Jo Riley. This is a major study that reconstructs the vast history of European drama from Greek tragedy through to twentieth-century theatre, focusing on the subject of identity.

***Three Plays of Girish Karnad: A Study in Poetics and Culture* (2004)** is a book written by Prof. Vanashree Tripathi. It is basically the comprehensive analysis of Karnad's three plays namely *Hayavadana, Tale-Danda* and *The Fire and the Rain*. It vividly explains that the plays of Girish Karnad have a decisive role in reconstructing and reframing Indian history, poetics and culture to sense our past in the contemporary domains of life. History has raised in Karnad a powerful will for social justice, a profound sympathy for the socially oppressed and the sı ˙ ltern.

***Hayavadana: A Critical Study* (2005)** is a book by Dr. L. S. Gill. This volume offers a detailed examination of Karnad's play *Hayavadana*. This clarifies the major issue of complexity in human relationships. It explores the theme of incompleteness at three levels—the animal, the human and the divine. It also deals with the idea of marriage by choice, role of the supernatural, idea of blessing and curse, departure of husband and wife, abandonment of child, etc. which are some of the core subjects of cultural studies that this play contains and Karnad incorporates them with the present situation strongly.

***The Plays of Girish Karnad: Critical Perspectives* (2009)** is a volume edited by Jaydipsinh Dodiya comprising more than thirty scholarly papers presents a critical assessment of Girish Karnad as a dramatist and offers multidimensional analysis of his plays. It is a roadmap to study the political setup that Karnad depicts in Tughlaq and diverts the attention of many readers towards Nehruvian era in Indian history. The volume also talks about the resemblances that Tughlaq bears with Shakespeare's *Richard II*. It represents Karnad as a true 'chronicler' as he displays without covering the flaws of the king's character and feels no pain to conjure our pity for him in his fall.

***The Indian Imagination of Girish Karnad* (2009)** is a book by P. Dhanavel that critically evaluates numerous themes especially identity crisis, literary genetics, humanism, condensation and desire for recognition in the plays of Girish Karnad. This renders an analysis that unfolds

Karnad's plays are drenched in an imagination which is truly Indian in character. This guides us in devising an original theory of Indian imagination that can be further applied to various other Indian texts and authors. It marks Karnad as a representative playwright with special reference to his famous play *Hayavadana* (1972). This book delineates Indian society from ancient times to the times now and about the playwright with his works. This book offers a deep understanding of the different environs in which writings of the writer have taken birth.

An Introduction to Greek Drama **(2010)** is a book penned down by Dr. K.G Srivastava. This book is immensely useful and satisfying to get the nub and theme of Greek drama with its evolution in a detailed manner.

Survey on English Drama and Literature: A Modern World view **(2010)** is a book by M. P. Kotter which works from the premise that British and Irish playwrights and theatre-makers have an important role to play as ethical witnesses and cultural commentators.

The Plays of Girish Karnad: A Study in Power Politics **(2011)** is a thesis written by Arjunsinh K. Parmar. This provides us a detailed account of Indo-Anglian Drama and a concept of power politics in Karnad's selected plays: *Hayavadana, Tughlaq, Tale-Danda* and *The Fire and the Rain.*

A History of Modern Drama **(2012)** is a work written by David Krasner that examines modern drama begins with Henrik Ibsen and ends with Samuel Beckett. This book analyses deeply the multiple features of modern drama and illuminates each dramatist's particular brand of modernism.

Cultural Retrieval as a dramatic strategy: A Study of Girish Karnad's Tughlaq, Tale-Danda and Bali-The Sacrifice **(2012)** is a thesis by Mudasir Ahmad Shah at the University of Kashmir for the degree of Master of Philosophy in English. This presents the crystal clear concept of cultural history of the second phase of Indian history that was chronicled by the playwright in Tughlaq.

State and Diplomacy under Tipu Sultan: Documents and Essays **(2014)**, is a volume edited and introduced by Irfan Habib. The main aim of this volume is to present documentary evidence that has probably not received its due in studies on Haider Ali and Tipu sultan.

***Indian Drama in English* (2014)** is an anthology of critical essays on the plays of Indian playwrights edited by Kaustav Chakraborty, written into the language which is termed as "Indian English".

***An Introduction to Literary Theory and Criticism* (2016)** is a book written by Anand B. Kulkarni and Ashok G. Chaskar describes literary theory and criticism an essential of every English Studies curriculum. This book covers the whole range of theories and movements in literature, from the ancient Greek and Roman theories, to modern-day movements like Cultural Studies and Digital Humanities.

Use of Myth and Symbols in the Play "Yayati" (2017) is a research article by Mr. Malhar Jayesh. This paper attempts to study mythology as a tool to show the reflection of society, its culture and the technique used by the writer.

***Re-Reading Aristotle's Poetics* (2018)** is a book written by Professor Akram Hossain. This book helps us to get the compendium of Aristotle's treatise *Poetics*. Each and every term which boggles the mind has been explained and explicated. It provides us the consolidated information about the origin and evolution of Greek drama.

***An insight into the Plays of Girish Karnad* (2018)** is a book written by Shankar Biswas. It is purely a qualitative analysis of how Karnad dispenses the myth, feminism, patriarchy, language, art and culture in his plays. The book is based on other scholars and critic's research study of the plays penned down by Girish Karnad. It is an examination of different aspects of the plays of Karnad.

***Tughlaq: A Critical Study* (2018)** is a critical study of the play *Tughlaq* by Shakti Batra that examines the text with its varied interpretations. It also provides the origin and development of Indian theatre.

Relevance of Historical Plays of Girish Karnad in Post-Independence Perspective (2018) is a research article written by Kishalaya Podder. It demystifies the truth that Girish Karnad has revolutionised the Indian drama in English especially on historical theme during the post-independence period. He reshaped the historical subject matters to reinforce the contemporary issues.

Tale-Danda: India: A Million Mutinies Now (2019) is a research paper by Dr Shailaja B. Wadikar. This paper highlights the most serious problem of caste system in Indian society. This

is the critical analysis of Girish's play Tale-Danda and the researcher exposes the dream of egalitarian society of the social activists like Basavanna of 12th century cannot be transferred into reality as society in all times is segregated on the basis of caste, colour, religion, gender etc.

***Tiger*: *The Life of Tipu Sultan* (2019)** is a book written by Kate Brittlebank that marks an excellent overview of valiant warrior Tipu and his times. Tipu Sultan was the most feared Indian of his time. To the British he was a cruel tyrant, but to his subjects he was a wise and just king. From his daring military exploits to his practice of recording his dreams, this book cuts through the myths to bring this enigmatic and controversial ruler and his times vividly to life.

***Confronting Colonialism: Resistance and Modernization under Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan,* (2019)** is a volume of essays edited and with an introduction by Professor Irfan Habib, commemorates the second centenary of Tipu's final battle against the British at Seringapatnam in 1799. The essays, devoted to the history of Mysore under Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan, include presentations made at annual proceedings of the Indian History Congress since pre-independence days, as well as papers published in various journals and periodicals.

***A Brief History of the English Drama: From the earliest to the latest times* (2019)** is a book written by William Echard Golden. This book gives us the concise historical and literary account of the drama, its origin, development and present status.

***A Survey of Indian-English Drama* (2019)** is a book by Satish Kumar that states drama as an art form which needs constant experimentation for its growth and development. This book gives us a detailed account about the contemporaries of Karnad and provides an exhaustive presentation of the evolution of Indian drama in English from the beginning to the present day.

***An Introduction to Cultural Studies* (2020)** is a book Pramod K. Nayar that offers a lucid introduction and explains the theory and practice of cultural studies with the help of detailed cultural analyses.

***Contemporary Literary and Cultural Theory: From Structuralism to Ecocriticism* (2021)** is a book written by Pramod K. Nayar is a comprehensive survey of the major theoretical schools that have designed our ideas about literary and cultural phenomena since the mid-twentieth century. It clarifies the base of cultural studies approach in a lucid manner.

Besides the above mentioned secondary sources, the texts of the selected plays: Yayati (1960), Tughlaq (1964), Hayavadana (1972), Tale-Danda (1990) and The
Dreams of Tipu Sultan (2004) have been taken into account.

Justification

The current research task would prove fruitful and applicable as it would shed an extra light upon the diverse facets of Karnad's plays to conjure up an ancient era that reverberates in modern situations. It would prove the playwright the greatest 'chronicler' of the 20th century in India. The critical study of Girish Karnad's historical plays will lead us towards the innovations produced by him and their contingent noteworthiness. It will be unambiguously an authentic documentation of his selected plays displaying a unique picture of contemporary society in a comprehensive way. The study shall provide the researchers an exhaustive account on the operation of characterisation and employment of Indian history, culture, politics, myth and folklores.

An intricate and multilayered look shall be enamoured to know the historical, political and cultural issues augmented by the writer with the aid of the standpoints rendered by different critics and scholars under the jurisdiction of cultural studies.

Objectives

1. To study and analyse the plays of Girish Karnad critically in the ambit of cultural studies.
2. To give an introduction to the history of Indian English drama.
3. To have a close look on themes and techniques used by Karnad in his plays.
4. To study and comprehend the use of myth, history and folktales in his plays.
5. To centre the selected plays of playwright in the light of contemporary issues.
6. To understand the way of how different aspects have been chronicled by him in the selected plays.
7. To study how the selected plays give tongue to the modern political, cultural and religious trauma.
8. To assess the contribution of the selected plays of Girish Karnad to the Indian Theatre.

Hypothesis

The proposed work aims to study Karnad as a 'chronicler'. In my knowledge, no detailed and comprehensive task is rendered in this area. Girish Karnad's plays adequately entwine the contemporary context in their formation. He takes vital problems of caste, religion, heredity, gender, illusion in society, cultural trauma and political setup to weave them into the nature and texture of his plays. His art of characterisation has remarkably instigated and contributed to the modern theatre as well. He with the rich theatrical experience dramatises the socio-political, economic and cultural issues outstandingly via the operation of myth, legend, history and folktale in his plays.

Study Area

The subject of the research that is chosen: "Girish Karnad as a Chronicler: Exploring the History, Culture and Politics of India in His Selected Plays", pertains to Indian English literature. The topic focuses on ancient, medieval and modern history, politics and culture of India in the arena of literature encompassing all the historical narratives of Karnad with their literary significance. In the present research, a circumstantial analysis of the selected plays shall be done in order to scrutinise the socio-political, religious, cultural and economic issues of the contemporary Indian society. The playwright shall be studied scholarly bearing in mind the literary themes, techniques, style, narration and method of chronicling the above mentioned domains. The pure analytical, interpretative and intellectual study of above all the things shall subsume the research exclusively.

Tentative Chapterisation

The present research work aims at an extensive study of the selected plays by an Indian dramatist Girish Karnad. So the tentative scheme of chapterisation will be as follows:

Introduction

- A thorough introduction to drama from its origin to the present day shall be given.
- Introduction to the playwright shall be disposed with special reference to his biography and works.

Chapter 1 An Overview of Cultural Studies

- This chapter shall display the meaning, understanding and importance of cultural studies.
- This shall also explain the playwright's attempts to deconstruct and document different facets of Indian society.

Chapter 2 Yayati as the Spectrum of Rejuvenating the Past

- This chapter shall focus on the history of King Yayati, one of the ancestors of Pandavas and Yaduvanshis.
- As Karnad has taken the source of this play from the Hindu epic *Mahabharata* and narrated the story in his own style, a comparative analysis shall be undertaken in the historical perspective.

Chapter 3 Tughlaq as a Critique of Historical Writing

- This chapter shall study and comprehend all the historical events narrated by the playwright meticulously and focuses on the devastation of the 14th Century ruler 'Tughlaq'.
- All the events shall be examined in the light of cultural studies approach.

Chapter 4 Representation of Culture and Cultural Ideology in Hayavadana

- This chapter shall explore the image of culture in Indian Society from Karnad's point of view.
- This shall also comment on the cultural ideology pervaded by the playwright to shape up the future cultural legacy in India.

Chapter 5 Casteism- A Bottleneck for Social Upliftment in Tale-Danda

- This chapter shall produce an account about the socio-religions, political, cultural and economic conditions of existing times and Southern India in the 12th Century AD during Bhakti movement.
- It shall also highlight the differences made on the basis of casteism in our society that obstruct the all-round development of humans living.

Chapter 6 The Enemy within: Textualisation of the Past in The Dreams of Tipu Sultan

- This Chapter shall explore the downfall of valiant ruler of 18th Century Tipu Sultan by his inner flaws and betrayal of comrades towards the leader.

Conclusion

Methodology

The present research is connected mainly with historical, political and cultural aspects. Hence the most accurate approach of research shall be provided by theory of cultural studies. Before

discussing anything about this approach, it becomes necessary to understand the term ‘culture’ in a comprehensive way.

Culture is a vague term and has no universally accepted definition. Generally culture can be defined as all the behaviours, way of life, arts, beliefs and institutions of a population that are passed down from generation to generation. Since originally the word ‘culture’ in French and Latin ‘cultura’ senses growing or cultivation, it surrounds all human aspects which links it with anthropological study. Cultural studies in such scheme offers a critic to analyse and associate every text with human life under the reality that any literary text is basically the production of cultural studies. Richard Hoggart is the first person who used the term “cultural studies” in 1964 when he founded the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at the University of Birmingham in the UK, which later came to be known as the “Birmingham School” of cultural studies. CCCS at the said University became the world’s first platform of cultural studies. Later the field of cultural studies became closely associated with Stuart Hall after he was appointed as a director of it by Hoggart in 1971.

Cultural studies under the purview of literature entails and exhibits the psychological aspects of humanity like moods, aptitudes, attitudes, etc. It enables us to provide multidimensionality of meanings inferred from the objects and thoughts as signs and signifiers which confirms deconstructive belief that there is no fixity of meaning. Cultural studies finds at greater length the political domain which John Fiske believes that ‘culture’ in cultural studies is ‘neither aesthetic nor humanistic in emphasis, but political’ (Storey 1). His statement assures deeper scope of cultural studies.

Cultural studies can be invariably taken as the study of anthropology for it does not go around a specific aspect of humanity rather it bears the critical, analytical and comparative working on all aspects of humanity. One finds without hesitation the claim that ideology is the kernel concept in cultural studies for it must be assumed as the core of all cultural combinations. It being an interdisciplinary subject of human life sheds light on social structures and foundations which means no cultural framework or reframing is possible in the absence of this cultural studies.

The writers that form the theoretical basis for the distinct British version of Cultural studies are as follows:

Louis Althusser (1918-1990): His name and fame was during the 1970s and 1980s. He has a significant role in the arena of cultural studies. This is particularly the case when questions of ideology are discussed in his ever famous essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation)" which was published in 1970. He contends that ideology has a material existence.

Matthew Arnold (1882-1888): He is known for his essay "Culture and Anarchy", published in 1869. It is a major work of criticism by him in which he defines culture as "the study of perfection". He contrasts culture with anarchy, the prevalent mood of England's then new democracy, which lacks standards and a sense of direction.

Roland Barthes (1915-1980): He was a French literary critic who gave Semiotic Theory that broke down the process of reading signs and focused on their interpretation by different cultures or societies. He believed that every ideological sign is either a Denotative sign system or a Connotative sign system.

Jean Baudrillard (1929-2007): He is best known for his analyses of media, contemporary culture and technological communication. He believed that society had become so saturated with 'Simulacra' and our lives so saturated with the constructs of society that all meaning was becoming meaningless by being infinitely mutable; he called this phenomenon the "precession of simulacra" in his "Simulacra and Simulation" (1981).

T.S. Eliot (1888-1965): In his critical treatise 'Notes Towards the Definition of Culture' (1948), Eliot gave much importance to family the principal way of conveyance of culture in a society.

Michel Foucault (1926-1984): Michel Foucault's studies concerning the role of power in society, and its productive function, offer cultural studies an opportunity to extend its theoretical boundaries, to encompass more ground than by remaining solely within an ideological approach. His famous work is "Madness and Civilisation" (1965). His study of culture is a history with

beginnings but no causes. He studied culture through the prism of technologies of power which he located strategically in discourse.

Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937): Gramsci is ever revered for his theory of cultural hegemony, which describes how the state and ruling capitalist class—the bourgeoisie—use cultural institutions to maintain power in capitalist societies. He is known for his book "Prison Notebooks" (1948).

Stuart Hall (1932-2014): He as a cultural theorist is credited with playing a role in expanding the scope of cultural studies to deal with race and gender, and with helping to incorporate new ideas derived from the work of French theorist like Michel Foucault. His famous book is "Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices" (1997). He defined culture as a space of interpretative struggle.

Richard Hoggart (1918-2014): Richard Hoggart was a British academic whose career covered the fields of Sociology, English literature and Cultural studies, with emphasis on British popular culture. By culture Hoggart meant how working-class people spoke and thought, what language and common assumptions about life they shared, in speech and action, what social attitudes informed their daily practice, what moral categories they deployed, even if only aphoristically, to make judgments about their own behaviuor. He is best known for his "The Uses of Literacy" (1957).

F.R. Leavis (1895-1978): Frank Raymond was an English literary critic of the early- to- mid 20th century. His famous book is "Mass Civilization and Minority Culture" (1930). He blames the shift of culture due to lack of tradition. He also creates a singular culture for everybody, rather than separate individual values and traditions.

Jean- Francois Lyotard (1925-1988): In his "The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge" (1979), he argues that the postmodern condition is the economic or cultural state or condition of society which is said to exist after modernity. He was a French philosopher, sociologist and literary theorist.

Edward Said (1935-2003): His work "Orientalism" (1978) is a hegemonic discourse for him. According to Said, in the Middle East, the social, economic and cultural practices of the ruling Arab elites indicate they are imperial satraps who have internalized a romanticized version of Arab Culture created by French, British and later, American Orientalists.

E. P. Thompson (1924-1993): Thompson in his book "The Making of the English Working Class" (1963) concentrates on English artisan and working class society. He attempts to add a humanist element to social history.

Raymond Williams (1921-1988): Raymond Williams was a socialist writer, academic, novelist and critic influential within the 'new left' (a political movement in the 1960s and 1980s) and in wider culture. His writings on poetics, culture, the media and the literature contributed to the Marxist critique of culture and the arts. In his ever remembered book "Culture and Society" (1958), he argues that the notion of culture developed in response to the Industrial Revolution and the social and political changes it brought in its wake. He defined culture as 'a whole way of life'.

Since Cultural studies solely is a multidisciplinary approach provided by other theories like Marxist, postcolonial, structuralist, feminist and post modernist theory. The study shall comprise all these theories. So the research methodology of this study shall be interdisciplinary and wherever required, all these critical theories shall be applied freely. For citation, bibliography and formatting, the 8th edition of the MLA style book shall be employed.

Expected Outcome of the Research

The expected outcome and end result of the research would be to institute an adhesive understanding of the Indian history, culture, religion and political system as represented in the plays of iconic and globally acclaimed Indian dramatist Girish Karnad

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